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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000324

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/01/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: NORTH DARFUR HUMANITARIAN UPDATE: PERMITS, ACCESS  
AND WATER

Classified By: CDA Cameron Hume, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In a follow-on meeting to their February 20-21 visit, CDA Hume and USAID Director Almquist met again on February 27 with North Darfur Governor Yousef Kibbir in his El Fasher headquarters. Accompanying Governor Kibbir were the State Minister for Information, the State Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) Officer for North Darfur and the State Head of National Security for NGOs and International Organizations. Reiterating USG support for humanitarian operations in Darfur, and with the goal of lifting bureaucratic burdens from INGO workers, CDA Hume raised three issues pending from the previous week's discussions: 1) difficulties renewing residence and work permits for humanitarian workers; 2) restrictions on INGO and UN travel; and 3) the need to identify a location for a fourth IDP camp in El Fasher due to water shortages and full capacity of the other three.

¶2. (C) CDA Hume also used the meeting as an opportunity to preview SE Natsios' upcoming visit, noting that the visit would focus on the humanitarian situation in Darfur, political dialogue and AU/UN cooperation.

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Progress on Permits  
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¶3. (C) USAID Director noted progress on the issues of permits, thanking the Governor for his help in renewing permits for 30 INGO workers since the previous week's visit. She encouraged the Governor's continued facilitation of permits in El Fasher, especially as many workers were still waiting for renewals to be processed in Khartoum. The Governor said that he had discussed the matter last week with relevant state agencies, and was committed to facilitating permits in all areas under his control, though not if such facilitation would contradict federal rules. "We will inform you when we reach a solution," he said.

¶4. (C) Many INGO workers face difficulties traveling to areas outside the main towns of El Fasher, Geneina and Nyala. CDA Hume pointed out that if they can't travel they assume that the government is purposefully blocking them. "You may get worse press than you deserve," he added. Governor Kibbir again agreed to facilitate access to areas under his control, while suggesting that perhaps the U.S. could help ensure passage to other areas by encouraging leaders of those areas to sign the DPA. (Note: On the same day, Embassy staff in El Fasher received an e-mail from UN counterparts saying that the blanket extension for travel permits in North Darfur had been extended until March 12; that afternoon, however, three WFP vehicles, one carrying the USAID Food for Peace program

director, were not allowed to enter Kutum by local military intelligence. End note.)

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Water into Bricks  
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15. (C) Regarding the water shortage in IDP camps, specifically in the Al Salam camp two kilometers outside of El Fasher, CDA Hume observed that any unexpected influx of new IDPs would be disastrous for the already water-strapped camp, and suggested that the Governor and the HAC work with the UN to create contingency plans for such an event, including identifying a site for a new camp. While acknowledging the need for such planning, the Governor also maintained that a principal factor of the water shortage was IDPs using the water for more than just personal consumption, most commonly for building bricks. "But we hope there are no new arrivals!" he said. (Note: CDA Hume and USAID Director made a subsequent unplanned visit to the Al Salam camp, where the IRC assistant camp coordinator confirmed that water was being used to manufacture bricks and that the camp had initiated an information campaign to discourage this. End note.)

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Comment  
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16. (C) While the meeting was positive in tone and the Governor professed cooperation on all fronts, specific actions were not agreed to. The presence of the local HAC commissioner, as well as national security and military intelligence, indicated the Governor's seriousness in addressing these issues. USAID's experience in Kutum that

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same day also raises the question of how much the Governor is indeed able to achieve in the areas under his control.  
HUME